

Wind Beneath My Wings

by jmlane57

A post-DH fic filling in some of the missing scenes in the last chapter of the book. Basically, Ginny is tired of Harry and company still treating her like a child and is determined that they stop, whatever she has to do to prevent it. Based on the song "Wind Beneath My Wings" by Bette Midler, although it is not a songfic.

A Beautiful Face Without A Name

Chapter 1 of 1

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Wind Beneath My Wings

(Sung by Bette Midler)

It must have been cold there in my shadow

To never have sunlight on your face

You were content to let me shine, that's your way

You always walked a step behind

So, I was the one with all the glory

While you were the one with all the strength

A beautiful face without a name for so long

A beautiful smile to hide the pain

Did you ever know that you're my hero

And everything I would like to be

I can fly higher than an eagle

you are the wind beneath my wings

It might have appeared to go unnoticed

But I've got it all here in my heart

I want you to know, I know the truth,

of course I know it

I would be nothing without you

Did I ever tell you you're my hero

You're everything, everything I wish I could be

Oh, and I, I could fly higher than an eagle

you are the wind beneath my wings

'Cause you are the wind beneath my wings

Fly, fly, fly away, you let me fly so high

Fly, fly, so high against the sky

So high, I almost touch the sky

Thank you, thank you, thank God for you

The wind beneath my wings

He'd done it again ... damn him! Shunted her aside, left her behind, made her feel like a second-class citizen. Ginny had noted Harry's weariness and thin-ness; that, she understood and couldn't reasonably object to. It was his taking off with Ron and Hermione without a bloody word to anyone yet again that galled her. Wasn't she entitled to a little consideration, even a brief explanation before he left her yet again? Even an apologetic smile and a, "Sorry, Gin, but I need some sleep and something to eat now. Our time will come, I assure you. Meanwhile, bear with me." But there had been nothing. What was worse, she'd be fool enough to forgive him when he gave her that puppydog grin and one look from those gorgeous green eyes.

She had "bore with him" for a year, at least. No, since she was ten, actually. All he had put her through these last seven years, and now she was going through even more on his account. She understood the Prophecy, what he'd had to do, but that hadn't made it any easier to be without him while the Trio went traipsing off Merlin knew where, doing only Merlin knew what. Hadn't they spent enough time sequestered together as it was, having secrets between them that Ginny was unlikely to ever know *without* pulling something like this?

She would gladly have held him in her arms as he slept or fixed him a five-course dinner and listened to everything he said, all his adventures of the last year ... but no, he had considered Ron and Hermione better company, which really did a whole bloody lot for her ego! She had shelved, even denied, her feelings for him for so long, all for the sake of giving Harry breathing space. She had even dated others, even though her heart and mind always called out to him...but only last year had Harry been capable of responding in kind. And even then, it had only been a few glorious weeks before he had almost literally pulled the rug out from beneath her by breaking off their romance.

Why begin the relationship in the first place if he was only going to end it a short time later? What was the point? The Dark Lord probably had known about them right from the start, considering his psychic link with Harry. Had it taken Harry the duration of the romance before realising how "dangerous" it supposedly was for them to be together? It certainly seemed that way to her. But even now, even after Voldemort had been vanquished, there were still obstacles between them...but this time they were obstacles of Harry's own making.

How could she possibly be blamed for feeling hurt, neglected and left out, purposely shunted aside like a troublesome child? Even if he did actually attempt to compensate her for all he had put her through the last seven years, it wouldn't be nearly enough. Oh, well, what should she have expected but that Harry would put Ron and Hermione ahead of her? Not that she begrudged him the friendship...if anyone deserved it, he did...but was it so much to ask for a little attention in return? And when she most needed it, not when he could get around to it, make time in his ever-so-busy schedule or had nothing better to do! One thing was for sure, Mr. Harry Potter was going to get some choice words from her as soon as she saw him again.

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It was three days before Harry felt up to seeking Ginny out. He knew that, at least technically, he should have let her know he was leaving, given her a brief explanation as to why he wasn't up to being with her right now and a promise they would see each other just as soon as he was able. Unfortunately, he had simply been too tired, too hungry, too *everything* to have thought beyond his immediate condition ... and she couldn't have been pleased at his choice of companions, either, even if they were his best friends. He fully intended to make things up to her (as best he could, anyway), but she had to give him time, cut him some slack. They had been apart over a year and needed to get used to each other again.

He had a pretty good idea how she must have felt at his going off without a word to her. She might even still be feeling that way, for all he knew. It wasn't just the last year he had to make up for, either ... it was the last seven. And now that his most important obligation had been satisfied, Harry could concentrate on other things, specifically, the rest of his life and what he intended to do with it. With a part of him, he hoped that Ginny would be a large part of that life. That is, if she would still have him after the way he had treated her for so long...and it would take longer than overnight for him to make up for all the times he had been an thoughtless, insensitive, oblivious prat.

Not that he had consciously intended to be one; it had just happened to turn out that way. Ginny was the best thing to ever happen to him; Harry couldn't lose her...especially not now, not when he needed her the most. Not that he would blame her if she didn't believe that anymore. Maybe it was time to devote himself totally to Ginny now, getting to know her all over again and...he smiled wickedly at the thought...*all* of her this time.

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It was nearly supertime by the time Harry found Ginny studying in her dorm room for her NEWT exams. She looked up at the soft knock on her door and his voice, not exactly thrilled at the interruption, any more than she'd been in the mood to hear his voice or anything he had to say.

"Yes, Harry. What do you want?" She found it very difficult not to throw out the sarcastic rejoinder, "So the great Harry Potter deigns to honour this poor simple girl with his exalted presence. What may I do for you, Chosen One?"

He'd probably hex her if she did that, come to think of it, but she was still tempted to do it, nonetheless. She had waited so long for him, yet he had still taken off without a word or even a smile. Too bad she couldn't make him realise just how it felt; he certainly deserved it.

"What do you think I want? I want to see you."

Ginny's lips twisted as she set her study materials aside, replacing her Self-Inking Quill in its customary spot on her lap desk. "So you finally remembered I exist? Where are your *bosom companions*, the ones whom you considered better company than the girl you profess to love?" Even as hard as she tried, Ginny couldn't keep hurt and bitterness out of her voice as she continued. "Oh, yes, I noticed how much you wanted to see me. You didn't even smile at me, much less speak to me before taking off with Hermione and my brother. Let me tell you, Mr. Big Shot, that really did wonders for my ego!"

"For Merlin's sake, Gin, cut me some slack! I've been through a lot this past year!"

"And I haven't?" she threw back. "Haven't I earned a place in your exclusive hierarchy by now, even after seven years of loving you from afar? Believe it or not, it's not easy being in love with the bloody 'Chosen One,' someone who has an unfortunate tendency to be a totally thoughtless, insensitive, oblivious prat, too occupied with his own importance to realise when the girl he professes to love needs him the most! Is it my fault, am I childish if I happen to feel left out, hurt and shunted aside? If only for that reason, I think I've bloody well earned the right to say my piece, and I defy you or anyone else to deny it to me."

Harry sighed. "I suppose I deserved that. All I can do is apologise and promise to do better by you now that I don't have Voldemort hanging over my head, ask your forgiveness for all I've put you through ... and not just for the last year. I never meant to make you feel left out, hurt or shunted aside, and would like a chance to show you how sorry I am...if you'll let me. Please know that it hurt me as much as it did you when I had to end things last year. However it may have seemed, I never meant it to be permanent, just until I could take care of Voldemort."

"But 'Mione said that you told her that you'd intended to sacrifice yourself, that you found out you were a Horcrux and had to make sure they were all destroyed."

"Exactly. And that's what I did."

"So how can you be alive now?"

"The Resurrection Stone."

"The what?"

Harry then made himself explain just what the Deathly Hallows were and how they were connected to him. When he finished, he was sitting before Ginny on her bed (Hermione had told him how to get around the spells and other restrictions on boys' using the stairs to the girls' dorms), holding her hands and raising them to his lips, looking earnestly into her eyes.

"The last thing I thought of, in fact, before the Killing Curse hit me was our first kiss, the sweet, warm feel of your lips on mine. If that doesn't tell you your priority in my mind and heart, nothing does ... and when you kissed me on my birthday ..."

Harry closed his eyes, mentally traveling back to his seventeenth birthday and the time he had been alone in Ginny's room with her and they had kissed for the first time in weeks. That was one time he would have gladly hexed Ron into next year for interrupting them, even if he was his best mate. The first time Harry had allowed himself to be closer to Ginny than arms' length since early June, and then to suddenly feel her in his arms again, the warm sweetness of her lips, the closeness of her body and the flowery smell which always seemed to emanate from her ...

"You don't know how much I'd missed you, Gin. Missed *us*. Missed our love, our closeness ... and then to have had Ron interrupt us ... Bugger!" Harry swore the last word softly under his breath.

Ginny raised a finger to his lips to stop him. "I know, love ... but we're alone now."

His green eyes locked with her brown ones. "Then you ... forgive me?"

Ginny nodded. "I know there were important things you needed to do. That was never the issue. What I objected to was you and the others treating me like a bothersome child, excluding me and brushing me aside, never sharing anything with me, just treating me as if I was a hindrance to you and constantly getting in your way, no matter how much I'd done for you."

"I'm sorry. But I won't allow it anymore...not from anyone, especially myself. Not that I won't slip on occasion, and when I do, I give you leave to at least figuratively kick me in the arse to bring me back to earth."

"Either that or a good Bat-Bogey Hex," Ginny joked, stroking his lips. "Meanwhile, we've got a lot of time to make up for. Come here, you." Harry couldn't move into her arms fast enough ... and after a time...while he still had the presence of mind to do so...he put a Locking and Silencing Charm on the door so no one could interrupt them this time.

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Naturally they couldn't do this all the time, especially since Ginny shared a dorm room with four other sixth-year girls, so they used his dorm room on occasion, if not the Shrieking Shack or the Room of Requirement. This time, it seemed that it was all the lovers could do to stay away from each other long enough to do schoolwork (Harry had decided to come back and finish his schooling, as had Ron and Hermione), much less to sleep or eat. It was also very difficult, to put it mildly, to keep their hands and lips off each other. There were even times when the lovers spent entire nights together.

In fact, it was during one of these nights that Harry decided to propose to her and told everyone closest to them to keep it on the Q.T. until they finished school. It wouldn't be easy, Merlin knew, but both knew that the other was well worth waiting for...and after having come within a bare whisker of losing her forever, Harry vowed that he was never going to let Ginny go again ... and would only reluctantly let her out of his sight, and even then, only for as long as he deemed absolutely necessary.

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Of course, the course of true love rarely runs smoothly...and even as much as Ginny loved Harry and was thankful beyond words that he was back with her, in her arms again ... among other things ... there were still times she was just as inclined to hex him as look at him. How could anyone be so bloody clueless? Even Ron showed more brains, and that was saying something! Harry had once said he owed Ron and Hermione for sticking with him for so long. The pair had just finished a long, languorous session of lovemaking when he said it, just snuggling comfortably together.

"What about me? Aren't I included in that deal?"

Harry gave her a funny look. "How can you ask that? Of course you are!"

"Then why do I have to hear about everything from Ron and Hermione? Just once, why can't I hear it from you?"

"I thought the whole point was letting you know everything. What did it matter who the source was?"

"It bloody well matters to *me*, Mister, especially after all the time I've waited for you, put my life on hold for you. I swear, Harry, you can sometimes be the most clueless, boneheaded git who ever lived! I stuck with you just as many years, was every bit as loyal, even kept a respectful distance from you for years in order to give you breathing space. I would think that would make you at least a *little* appreciative of my efforts, help you think beyond the end of your nose, beyond the obvious choice of companions. I would gladly have held you in my arms all night long as you slept, fixed you a five-course dinner, listened avidly for hours while you talked ... been just as good company as anyone and better than most ... but what do you do?"

"Who do you think of first? If you'd thought even a little and approached me as you should have, I would have gladly gone with you, done anything you asked without

complaint, all because I loved you ... but, no. Good old Ginny, she can wait until you bloody well have nothing better to do, no one else better to spend time with, a few free minutes in your oh-so-busy schedule, much less finally deign to remember I exist! I am sick of being ignored, shunted aside, treated like a second-class citizen. Totally and thoroughly *sick*, I tell you...and won't stand for it any longer! You gave me leave to figuratively kick your arse; well, consider this a literal one."

Harry sighed in affectionate exasperation. "I suppose the next thing you're going to say is that I'm just as arrogant, attention-seeking, thoughtless, presumptuous and full of myself as Snape always said my dad was."

"Actually, yes, but you've said it for me."

"How can you ever love someone like me, then?"

"I don't know, but Merlin help me, I do. I went through hell for you, but it was worth it. You're back in my arms again...and you bloody well better stay there this time! If we ever do have to fight again, though, I want to be by your side, partners and equals, not put on a shelf while you go off Merlin knows where to do Merlin knows what. You should know by now that I'm safest with you, wherever you are, and kindly keep in mind that I not only can take care of myself, but watch your back and protect the others as well if necessary. The incident in the Department of Mysteries should prove that, despite the fact that you didn't even want me to go initially. Also, what was the point of teaching me anything in the D.A. if you didn't intend to let me use the knowledge?"

Harry thought for a time and had to admit she was right. "You're right, Gin. I'm sorry to have so underestimated you ...*again*. I hope you know I don't consciously mean to, and intend to do the best I can to make things up to you, but it's going to take longer than overnight for me to straighten up and fly right."

"Tell you what. I'll cut you some slack if you start including me in your little bull sessions after this."

Harry was silent for a long time before he answered...and even then, it was only one word. "Agreed."

"Fine. But keep in mind, I intend to hold you to it. Meanwhile, we have better things to do. Come here, Mr. Potter." With that, Ginny moved her partner's face to hers and kissed him thoroughly, prompting another long, lovely shagging session. While Harry still had all his faculties, he made a mental note to make sure he not only treated Ginny as more of an equal but saw to it that Ron and Hermione did too ... and most importantly, didn't keep her in the dark so much about important matters. As she'd said, she knew as much magic as any one of them, had been every bit as loyal to him and therefore deserved the truth just as much as, if not more than, they. Meanwhile, all he wanted to do was possess her as many times as the night would allow. Further talks would come later...but not too much later, and even then, only if he played his cards right.

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It was during one of the times that Harry and Ron were off somewhere doing something they called "male bonding" that Ginny decided to have a talk with Hermione as to just what had gone on during their quest. When Hermione told her, Ginny smiled and said, "At least you're telling me something. That's more than either my dear brother or paramour can be bothered to do."

"They've not told you anything about what happened during the last year?"

"Just passing references here and there," Ginny confirmed.

"Well, you know that Harry and Ron are like that," Hermione reminded her. "It's like pulling teeth to get anything out of them sometimes."

"As far as that goes, I'm surprised *you're* telling me anything. Usually the three of you keep everything that's happened during the last year between yourselves and don't tell anyone, not even me."

"Well, you must know at least one reason why that is...or rather, was," came the reply.

"I do ... but that reason no longer exists, so why are they still so close-mouthed about the whole thing?"

"It must simply be a male thing. That's the only reason I can think of."

"It can't only be that, since you've done it too," Ginny reminded her. "But I could have lived with it a lot easier if Harry had at least had the decency to explain that he wasn't up to being with me at that point and to just bear with him until he was able. But there was *nothing*, 'Mione. Nothing! If he'd just bothered to smile at me apologetically and said something along the lines of, 'Our time will come; I just need to have some rest and food right now.' But Merlin forbid! He simply seeks you two out and takes off without a word to me or anyone else, unless it was Neville, since he was the one who ended up killing Nagini, or Luna, who created the diversion which enabled you three to escape the rest of us, including--it seems--me."

"'Escape' had little to do with it--and it's not that Harry didn't want to be with you, Gin. You know as well as I do what he's been through; he was, or more specifically, we all were, just knackered into next week. He wanted to approach you, to ask you to be with him, he really did. It was just that..."

"I seemed occupied," Ginny finished. "Oh, how insufferably *noble* of him. As if Mum wouldn't have understood!"

"And it's not that none of us ever trusted you or believed in your loyalty; it's just that we didn't want you to get in harm's way."

"Which I suppose gives you all the right to treat me like a bothersome child, always expecting me to leave when you intended to speak of your quest, consistently keeping me in the dark about your plans, just treating me basically like I was a hindrance to you instead of an equal partner, always claiming you 'couldn't' tell me anything when the truth was that you *wouldn't*. All of you so conveniently forget what all I've been through at Voldemort's hands, the possession by that bloody diary Horcrux...not to mention what I did to help you in the Department of Mysteries or when Dumbledore died."

"We appreciated everything you did, Gin, I assure you, but ..."

"I still wasn't good enough to go along with you on the most important quest of all."

"It was never a question of your being 'good enough.' No one knows better than I how good you are at magic. As I said, it was mainly because we didn't want you to get hurt. We were going to risk enough on our own without you risking yourself as well. As it was, you nearly got killed and your mum saved your life. Nor am I going to apologise for wanting to keep you safe. I'm sorry if you got hurt or neglected by any of us along the way, but it seemed to be an unavoidable aftereffect. Nor am I going to apologise for my friendship with Harry or your brother. I don't think Ron would, either."

"I don't expect you to. That was never the issue. It's the fact that Harry was one of the biggest, most hypocritical gits who ever lived, always disliking things being kept from *him*, yet he consistently kept things from me and all the others who cared about him, then bloody well wondered why we got upset!"

"I don't know what else to say. You seem to have an answer for everything. And if you have issues with Harry, I suggest you take them up with him."

"Oh, I have, believe me, and so far he's toeing the line, but after all these years of shutting me and the others out, all in the guise of 'caring' about us, supposedly wanting us to stay out of harm's way, how long can I expect it to last?"

Just then they heard the unmistakable voices of their men returning and decided to shelve their talk for the time being, although Hermione suspected that Ginny would take it up again at some point the first chance she got. She really couldn't blame her friend for being upset and couldn't deny that there were times that she herself had been just as upset with either Ron or Harry, if not both, but only those who had been pretty much consistently shut out could truly identify with Ginny, and there had been several

people like that...such as Mrs. Weasley, McGonagall and Lupin.

In fact, it was a wonder that Remus ever managed to forgive Harry for the way he'd talked to him once regarding his supposed treatment of his wife and child in order to offer to accompany them on their quest. Harry had done his share of shutting people out, not giving them a chance to prove themselves or trust them, yet expected them to blindly trust him, being every bit as infuriatingly non-forthcoming as Dumbledore had been when it came to getting anything out of him. He should have known by now that the way to get people to trust you and believe in you was to trust and believe in them in turn.

The boys entered the room, gave their ladies each a kiss and smiled at them, asking if they'd had a good time together as they had. Hermione said she couldn't answer that for sure until and unless she found out what Ron and Harry had done together. A short time after that, Ron and Hermione left. Once they were alone, Harry joined Ginny on their bed, snuggling close to her as he began to kiss and caress her. "Gods, I missed you, Gin, and not just for the last few hours. I don't know what I'd have done if I hadn't had you behind me all this time."

"It'd have been easier if you'd been up-front with me a lot earlier," she softly pointed out. "But I did promise to cut you some slack, so I'm not going to harp on it anymore, at least not right now. What matters is that you're doing all you can to make things up to me...but I warn you, it had better continue or else a Bat-Bogey Hex will be the least of your troubles!" she warned playfully as she nuzzled his neck, then stroked the back of it as she moved sensuously against him.

"Oh, Merlin, don't do that, Gin," her partner moaned softly. "You know what that always does to me."

"In that case, I'm glad we're going to get married ... and assure you that I'd be just as lost without you as you would be without me. As the song goes, 'you're the wind beneath my wings.' You always have been, and always will be."

"That goes double for me. Who else could have put up with all my bone-headed stunts and acting like an oblivious, insensitive, unthinking prat the way you have?"

"You meant well, love," she reminded him. "And even though you were an insensitive, unthinking, oblivious prat sometimes, you were *my* insensitive, unthinking, oblivious prat."

"But it couldn't have been easy for you to endure," he insisted.

"It wasn't, but what mattered was that you came back to me ... and that we're going to be spending the rest of our lives together."

Harry lifted her face and looked earnestly into her eyes. "What did I ever do to deserve you?"

"You were you, the person you are. And don't you ever change!"

He didn't reply, simply moved close to kiss her deeply. "I won't if you don't. Now we have better things to do than talk." With that, Harry turned his partner beneath him and proceeded to once again make tenderly passionate love to her.

Once they finished and she had fallen asleep for the night, Harry whispered to her before falling asleep himself and after giving her a tender good-night kiss. "I love you, wind beneath my wings. However it may have seemed, I have always loved you, and always *will* love you for as long as I live, with every breath I take, every beat of my heart, for as long as I live ... and possibly beyond. You are the sweetest dream I could ever have hoped to have...but best of all, you're the one which came true, and I could ask for nothing more than to be allowed to live it with you."

Harry then closed his eyes after removing his glasses and setting them aside on the night table. It was only then that Ginny smiled in her sleep, warmed by his loving words and equally sweet kiss, making a silent vow to teach every child they might have to be just as appreciative of the love of their spouse as Harry was of her. After that, nature simply took its course, and the couple became man and wife. The wedding took place three years later, after Harry had completed his Auror training and Ginny had completed her Healer training.

Some months after that, they became the parents of a nine-pound, three-ounce, twenty-two-inch, black-haired, hazel-eyed son named James Sirius...then in due time, another son named Albus Severus, who was a carbon copy of his father, including the green eyes. Lastly, they had a red-haired, brown-eyed daughter named Lily Ginevra: and one may be assured that Ginny kept her vow, reminding the children of it at every opportunity from the time they were old enough to understand...now and for as long as they lived at home.